

## Brownlow, Kellie

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**From:** Brownlow, Kellie  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 15, 2015 7:16 PM  
**To:** Klepal, Dan (CMG-Atlanta)  
**Cc:** Chapman, Leroy (CMG-Atlanta)  
**Subject:** Re: Correction

Mr Chapman,

Mr Klepal indeed walked up on the Dias during a commission meeting in a very unusual move for a reporter. I also advised that I would be happy to help him but he would not talk with me. Other witnesses, including the county attorney, overheard his questions about campaign finance. His account doesn't reflect the account of other witnesses on that front.

Kellie

On Jul 15, 2015, at 6:10 PM, Klepal, Dan (CMG-Atlanta) <[Dan.Klepal@ajc.com](mailto:Dan.Klepal@ajc.com)> wrote:

Leroy, I didn't know this conversation was taking place. If I had been a part of the dialog, I could have helped clarify this situation pretty quickly:

I approached Chairman Lee on Tuesday with the intent of asking him questions on multiple issues: campaign finance, BRT, along with the issues of the day -- changes to the ethics ordinance, the new tax rate and a \$10 million bond for South Cobb. As I began asking my first question, which was indeed about campaign finance, Lee stated that he was not going to talk to me. As I attempted to finish my sentence, and took a step toward him in the crowded and noisy room, he literally screamed at me to "get back." A police officer then rushed over to Lee and escorted him out a side door.

If that's not refusing to comment, I'm not sure what is.

Thanks,

DK

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**From:** Brownlow, Kellie [<mailto:Kellie.Brownlow@cobbcounty.org>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 15, 2015 6:02 PM  
**To:** Chapman, Leroy (CMG-Atlanta)  
**Cc:** Klepal, Dan (CMG-Atlanta)  
**Subject:** Correction

Mr. Chapman,

Part of my job is to ensure media inquiries are responded to on behalf of Chairman Lee. As such, we have set up a protocol to make sure we respond in a timely manner. I understand your reporters have a job to do to gather and report information, and it is my job to help facilitate that.

In Dan Klepal's article today regarding updates to the Cobb County ethics code, it was reported that Chairman Lee refused to comment. This is not true. In fact, Mr. Klepal did not pose a question to

Chairman Lee about the proposed ethics code amendments. Dan Klepal did approach the Chairman following the BOC meeting yesterday, but as several of my peers overheard, he asked Chairman Lee to comment on an issue related to campaign finance. Chairman had no comment on that issue. At that time, I reminded Dan that my job is to help him if he has any inquiries of Chairman Lee and to please contact me if that is the case. I did not receive an inquiry seeking comment on the proposed ethics changes.

This is not the first time something like this has happened. On June 28th Dan wrote an article on SunTrust Park and reported that Chairman Lee did not respond to his request for comment. Dan did not contact his office nor me requesting comment from the Chairman. Rather, he called his personal cell phone and left a voice mail which incidentally was not checked until after the story was published. As you can imagine, Chairman Lee receives dozens of calls and voice messages daily. While Chairman does his best to respond to all calls regarding the business of the county, it is very difficult to keep up with all calls in real time.

As Deputy Chief, it is my job to receive and respond to all media inquiries of Chairman Lee. Media protocol is not an uncommon practice in local government and it is a practice that works very well with your peers at WSB, the Marietta Daily Journal, WABE and even your peers at the AJC on the editorial and Politifact teams. For some reason, Dan Klepal is the only reporter who will not contact Chairman Lee (or me) at his office.

I would like to point out that when Dan has submitted inquiries to me, I have responded. In fact, I recently worked with him to visit my office to take photos for a piece he was doing on the office renovation. However, since that visit he has stopped contacting me. Other professionals at the AJC have worked with me in a respectful and constructive manner. I know there is a protocol for communicating with the Mayor of Atlanta, CEO of DeKalb County, and other County Chairman that is respected by the journalists at your newspaper. As such, we would appreciate it if Mr. Klepal would kindly respect our process as well. As the purpose of it is to help make sure reporters are responded to in a timely manner. Further, we request you correct the record about Chairman Lee in today's story.

Respectfully,

Kellie Brownlow

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